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THE CASE OF Compelling Men TO THE Holy Sacrament OF THE LORD'S SUPPER, CONSIDERED.

And AUTHORITY Vindicated in it, by the Rules of the Gospel, from the common and Popular Objections against it.

Luke 14. 23. *Go and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.*

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LORD'S SUPPER

CONSIDERED

And AUTHORITY Vindicated

TO THE READER.

I Beseech thee believe, that it is not to irritate or incense Authority against any denomination of Men, that this Case is so publickly considered. I hope the Clergy of this City have given such Instances of their Temper and Candor to those that differ from them, that they shall not now be represented as men of Sanguinary Dispositions, and Movers of Persecution.

And if after all their labour and pains to instruct and perswade men, and give them satisfaction in all their great doubts upon which they separate from the Communion of the Church, they must yet be reproached as Cruel, and Persecutors of their Brethren; it is but another taste of that Civility that they meet with from this Generation.

I know of no other design in these Papers, (and I am sure I have most reason to know) but to remove an Exception, that some have causelessly taken against coming to the Sacrament, because they are forced to do so; and to discharge some

part of that duty that we owe to our Superiours, with which the Author thinks it scarce consistent, to hear men belch and rayl against the Government, and the present proceedings of it, without opening our mouths in their defence; especially when what they do, is so very fairly capable of it.

This I think an instance of that duty we owe to those above us; out of which could we be frighted with hard words and ill Names, we should have deserted it long since: for this is not the first time (I wish it might be the last) that faithfulness, and endeavours of service to the Government, have been made our Crime, and ministred to the ill usage we have met with from Some men.

I hope, all the Exceptions against this great Service in our Religion, will in time be singly considered, and satisfied; and this is therefore crowded into the number of them; and if it seem new or strange, those cross and wayward tempers of men are only to be charged, which have made this a new and strange Exception.

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THE CASE OF Compelling Men To the HOLY SACRAMENT.

I Can ſcarce ever read our Saviours famous Parable of the Noble-man's making a great Feaſt, ſending out ſervants to invite gueſts, the unſucceſſfulneſs of their invitation, and the ſilly unworthy excuſes framed againſt it, till at laſt the Lord was conſtrained to arm other Servants with power, and to *compel them to come in*, but my mind is ſtill running a Parallel between theſe things, and our own preſent circumſtances, with reſpect to the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as well as ſome other things.

God Almighty hath been in this, as gracious to us, as ever he was to his own people the *Jews*. He hath provided all things neceſſary to our Salvation; and particularly, hath furniſhed a Table with the precious Symbols of his own Son's Body and Blood; *That bread that came*

came down from Heaven, and is meat indeed; and that wine that would chear our hearts, and fill them with a joy that the world is a ſtranger to; the luſhious and ſweet Feaſt in which we antedate Heaven, and make ſeiſure of, and receive pledges for the happineſs of it.

But alas, our folly and madneſs is equal to theirs alſo: we turn our backs upon theſe Heavenly proviſions, and frame Apologies and Excuſes againſt them. We let every ſilly occaſion ſuperſede our regard to them, and ſeek for Arguments to furniſh us with Reaſons of keeping from them.

God keeps up a race of his ſervants the Prophets, whoſe ſtanding employment and office it is, to ſtrive with us, and to perſwade us to accept of that mighty Salvation that is provided for us, and to partake of this ſervice which is ſo greatly conducive to all the purpoſes of it; and I think it may modeſtly be ſaid, they are faithful to their charge.

Yet alas, how few will hear their report, ſo as to comply with the end of it? what a few can they perſwade to become gueſts to their Lord? and how long will it be e're his Table be ſo full, that they may not ſay as the ſervant in the Parable did, *It is done, Lord, as thou commandedſt us, and yet there is room?*

What ſhall we ſay to this neglect of men! ſhall we ſtand bewayling, and inveighing againſt the folly and madneſs of it? we have done that long enough, even till our throats are dry; and yet to very little purpoſe, God knows. What have we now left, but to get us to our great Maſter, and tell the ſad ſtory of mens obſtinacy to him? how juſtly might we beg him to take the matter into his own hand; to ſend out other ſervants more noble than we, and arm them with power to *compel men to come in?* juſt as that Maſter in the Parable did

did in the like case, command his *servant to go out into the high ways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.*

And so it is, the wisdom of Authority hath prevented us, and saved us the labour of making this request; it hath thought fit to take the matter into it's own hand, in a great measure, and to revive the Laws that the Piety and Wisdom of our Fore-fathers have thought fit to make, to ingage men to a due care and observance of the Services of Religion: and I would men would consider, whether this can be thought less than necessary, and whether they have not been fairly proceeded with.

Hitherto all fair means have been used; nothing but love and kindness, and all possible condescension. Men have been indulged in their petulancy, and time allowed for their prejudices and prepossessions to wear off in. The Rod of the Law hath been only held over them, but not suffered to fall on them. Authority hath been pleased to wait, till the common objection of one great Party among us, is taken wholly away.

The great Plea against Conformity, for twenty years past, hath been the *obligation of the Solemn League and Covenant*, which some of the Leaders of that great Party had taken; and it hath been publickly declared, that were not the renouncing of that required, they would conform.

The time that this was required for, is now expired, and they are at liberty from that which they counted grievous to them: but now, instead of the promised Conformity, there are new Arguments started against it, and all the old ones furbished afresh; the opposition against the Church more sturdy and obstinate (if it be possible) than before, and all the pretences of Conscience in this matter, shewed plainly to be meer trick and artifice.

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This therefore hath forced Authority to take other measures, and to try what the ſtricter hand of Law will do with them, upon whom indulgence and kindneſs have been ſo ineffectual; and whether they may not tye men to that duty, to which they cannot perſwade them.

They have ſadly ſeen how little lenity and kindneſs can oblige, and how far favour is from endearing ſome men; yea, that it hath unhappily rendred them worſe, more bold, and more extravagant in their Separation; made them only more keen and eager againſt the Church, and given them the fairer opportunity to wreak their malice upon her; which they had ſo diligently improved, that they had brought her near to a *Criſis* indeed, and were in a fair way of effecting their purpoſe, when as groſs Hereticks as ever were, yea, when black Atheiſts were called the only *True Proteſtants*, and ſuch a *Jargon* of different and contrary Sects Marſhall'd in one Body, as well as under one Name, to fight againſt her.

Yea, they have ſeen and felt ſomething more than this, that tender Conſciences have too commonly hard hands, and that the pulling down the Church, hath been but a Prologue and ſtep to diſſolving the State. Some men have begun with the Supremacy, and faults of *Aaron*, only that they might the more ſucceſsfully caſt down the Government of *Moſes*; and fright men from the Communion of the Church, the more eaſily to muſter them againſt the King: and therefore made it neceſſary for the Government to provide againſt the one, if they intended to ſecure and preſerve the other.

They have thought it high time therefore now to change their meaſures, and to exerciſe Power, when Mildneſs and Clemency would not prevail. And

And this is one thing that hath raiſed the clamour, and enraged men to inveigh againſt Proceedings ſo lowdly at preſent: *What, muſt men be driven like beaſts? muſt they be compelled to that Service which ought to be free and voluntary? is this Chriſtian dealing? or the way to make Converts? can this bring men to Church, or engage them to offer a reaſonable Service to God there? it may poſſibly make Hypocrites, and cauſe time-ſervers to come in; but ſure the Faith of men cannot be forced, nor they ever brought in love with Religion and the Service of it, by ſuch means.*

Theſe, and ſuch as theſe, are the common clamours of men againſt theſe Proceedings of Authority; and the truth is, (by the way) it lets us ſee how ſtrangely froward and peeviſh ſome men are. But a little while ago, the common cry and objection was, want of Diſcipline among us; but now, that we are too ſtrict in it. Heretofore we were derided and cenſured for ſlackneſs and remiſneſs, for taking too little care of Religion; but now we are blamed for taking too much. So very contrary pretences can ſome men make uſe of againſt the Church and Government, and wreſt every thing that they do, or do not, into an Argument againſt them.

I am not willing to reflect farther upon this petulancy; my Province at preſent is to ſhew the injuſtice and unreaſonableneſs of it, and to vindicate this proceeding of our Governours from thoſe aſperſions and reproaches that are caſt upon them. And I ſhall lay the foundation of this Apology upon that paſſage of our Saviour, in the Parable I have been alluding to; *Go and compel them to come in.*

It is probable, it will be ſaid, that this is only a by-expreſſion, and far enough from the purport and deſign of this Parable; and therefore to argue from it, is againſt

that common rule that Divines have agreed upon, that Parables are not to be argued from, but only in the main thing intended by them.

To this it will be eaſie to anſwer, that though it be indeed ſo as is urged, yet our collection relies upon a certain reaſon, and that is the Decorum and Propriety of ſpeaking that our Saviour obſerved in all his Diſcourſes, and how far he was from expreſſing any thing in unjuſtifiable or unbecoming Phraſes, though it were a thing purely incidental, and were never ſo much collateral, or beſide the great matter that he intended to ſay.

To be ſure, he would never have aſcribed ſuch a thing as this to God Almighty, under the perſon of this great man, though never ſo much by the by, had it been ſo unbecoming, and contrary to his diſpenſations with men; nor ever have mentioned his commanding his ſervants to *compel men to come in* to Religion, and the Miniſtries of it, had it been unlawful, and contrary to the temper of the Goſpel (as is pretended) to uſe any force at all, either to reſtrain men from evil, or tye them to that which is good. We may reſt aſſured, that no ſuch expreſſion had ever fallen from him, had he intended that every man ſhould be purely at his own liberty in Religion, to do, or not to do what himſelf pleaſed.

So that I think this expreſſion will favour our purpoſe, and be a good foundation to ſuperſtruct an Argument upon. In the proſecution of which, I ſhall do theſe two things.

1. Propoſe ſome general and more abſtracted Conſiderations, for the juſtifying the preſent proceedings in this caſe.

2. And ſecondly, inquire immediately into the Merits of the Cauſe, and examine it by the rules and meaſures of the Goſpel.

1. The

1. The general Conſiderations I intend, are theſe that follow.

1. That whatever is done of this nature, is done by our lawful Governours.

2. It is done by thoſe whoſe Authority reacheth to theſe things, and who are accountable to God for them.

3. It is done in a matter which is in it ſelf lawful, and plainly juſtified by the Laws of the Goſpel.

4. It is in a matter which is greatly gainful and advantageous to thoſe that are commanded.

5. It is occaſioned only by our ſelves, and our own unreaſonable neglect of our duty.

6. It is nothing elſe, but what thoſe very men that complain, have done in the like, or leſſer caſes.

7. It is no harm or injury to theſe men, upon their own common Principles.

1. Whatever is done of this nature, is done by our lawful Governours. I ſhall not need I hope to have any controverſie with men about this, nor will any (I believe) dare to diſpute the truth of it: though we poſſibly may have enough to queſtion the Government of the Church, yet certainly that of the Kingdom is unqueſtionable with any, but men of deſperate and rebellious Principles, and impatient of any Government but that which themſelves manage.

Now this alone is one good ſtep towards vindicating what is now done, and one good argument for mens Obedience and Submiſſion unto it. For it is ſcarce becoming men to diſpute and queſtion the actions of their lawful Governours in any thing; but to revile and reproach them, is lawful in none.

Subjection is tyed immediately upon the Conſciences of men, and obedience in all things (not eſſentially evil)

is a duty of Religion. By the ſame right that a Parent commands his Child, and a Maſter his Servant, by the ſame doth the King govern us; and we have no more right to quarrel the commands of the one, than Children and Servants have to repine and murmur at the precepts of the other; which they never have, but when either Parents or Maſters exerciſe an authority that doth no way belong to them.

2. Which in our caſe is not done: for Secondly, it is done by thoſe whoſe power reacheth to theſe things, and who ſtand accountable to God for them.

The power of Kings in Spiritual Matters, was never queſtioned (that I know of) in the Chriſtian Church, till Pride and Ambition began to corrupt it's Faith, and poiſon it's Doctrine, and till *Rome* began to aim at a Spiritual Empire, as well as it had had a Temporal one.

The Doctrine of diſcarding Kings and Emperours from any intermedling in Religion, was firſt hammered in the Conclave, and thence our Claſſical Divines have fetched it; and I wiſh it were the only inſtance, in which they ſymbolize with thoſe, that they ſo lowdly declaim againſt.

I am ſure the Kings of *Iſrael* ſuperviſed, and when occaſion was, reformed matters of Religion and the Church; and the better that they were, the more they intereſted themſelves, and employed their care about them; and embalmed their Names more by that, than all their Arms and glorious Atchievements. And when the Apoſtle commands Chriſtians to *pray for Kings, that they might live honeſt and godly* (i. e. religious) *lives under them*, he certainly thought their influence might be greatly helpful thereunto.

And the truth is, I do not well ſee how Kings and Governours can blaſt their honour more, and more blacken their own name, than by looking only to their own

own grandeur and honour, without any concern for his, whose Vice-gerents they are, by living themselves in glorious and *Ceiled Houses*, but letting *that of God* lye neglected and waſt, as the expreſſions in the Prophet are.

Certainly, when the great and final Audit comes, and when the Kings and Princes of the world come to ſtand before him *by whom they Reigned*, who is *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*; one great Inquiry will be, how faithful they have been to him their great Maſter, and how much or how little they have conſulted his honour and intereſt in the world: and thoſe doubtleſs will give their accounts with moſt joy to themſelves, and moſt acceptation to him, that have been tender of his Church, and conſulted the benefit of his Religion; that have been *nurſing Fathers* to the one, and tender of the other, and uſed their power to keep men in their duty to him and his Laws, as well as to their own.

And the Governours in the Church, and thoſe that are *over us in the Lord*, they *watch for our Souls* (ſays St. *Paul*) *and muſt give account* for them, *Heb.* 16. 17.

So that we muſt not think that our Governours exceed the bounds and limits of their own power, when they make Laws about Religion, and tye us to obſerve the ſervices of it; or that they do theſe things arbitrarily only, and to exerciſe their power over us: no, neither of theſe are true; their power reacheth to theſe things, and they are bound by their great Lord to take all the care they can of them: and therefore we muſt excuſe them; they do but their own duty to God when they compel us to do ours.

3. And that this is really our duty, and tyed upon us by the Laws of the Goſpel, is the third Conſideration, and will adde another reaſon to vindicate them in compelling us to it.

If

If this thing were contrary to the Gospel, then we might justly complain of their rigor and severity; or were it left wholly indifferent, then we might raise objections, and pretend invasion of our Christian liberty by these Laws, as tragically as we do in the like cases.

But when it is a thing plainly and expresly commanded by our Saviour, and tyed upon us as a constant and standing service of Religion, to be observed and practised by all Christians until his second coming again, (as it is most plain it is, if we will either consider his own words, or St. *Pauls* after him) then certainly there cannot be the least room for an objection in this matter.

Those that say the least of the power of Kings and Temporal Governours, do say they are obliged to see that the precepts of God be observed and kept by men, and that they are to inforce the Laws of Religion by their own; and when it is for their purpose, will boldly call for this exercise of their power; summon the Temporal Sword and Arms; when their own Spiritual ones are too weak; and be ready to *anathematize and curse* those powers, that in this *come not to help the Lord against the mighty.*

If it be their own exercise of Religion, why then it is *the Scepter of Christ*, whom all Kings are bound to support; and if it be any thing that they lack to have observed, why then it is *the Lords cause*; and the supporting of it, is no less than *fighting the Lords battel*, for which the highest Praises and Panegyricks are too little.

And therefore methinks men of this temper, and who are yet known to have acted still upon this principle, should for shame cease to complain & cry out against the Government, for using their power in that which they themselves allow the exercise of it lawful in; and not condemn it, when it compels men to nothing, but what

the

the Laws of Christ have made their necessary duty.

4. Yea and fourthly, which is as really their interest and advantage, as it is their duty; for so it is in this, as well as in all other precepts of the Gospel; they are real instruments of our happiness, as well as instances of our obedience.

I cannot now stand to enumerate all the benefits and advantages of receiving the Holy Sacrament of the Lords Supper; and I need to do it the less, because the Church hath done it for me. I will only recite the words in her Catechisme, which are sufficient at this time: **The strengthning and refreshing our Souls by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our Bodies are by the Bread and Wine.**

And certainly, if any thing can be an Apologie for the present exercise of power in our Governours, in constraining men to an observance of this service, this may; that it is a matter of pure kindness, and nothing but their own gain, that they are compelled unto: they are severely dealt with indeed in this, and a mighty wrong sure is done them, when they are compelled to be made happy and good!

All the world hath ever granted it lawful and innocent, nay, prudent and wise, to direct and govern those who are not able to govern and choose for themselves: Parents restrain the ignorance of Children, and think it no crime to whip them to that duty and exercise which they know to be good for them: and Guardians do the same thing too for their Minors; what they are assured is for their benefit, they compel them unto, though it be never so irksome to them, and spare not for their much crying: just as Chirurgions and Physicians consult the good, and not the ease and palate of their

their patients; and forbear not the cauſtick or the ſawe, or the bitteteſt potion, though perhaps the Patient muſt be bound in one caſe, and be even conſtrained in the other.

It is juſt the ſame caſe here; only ſo much the greater benefit, by how much the ſpirit and it's Salvation is better than the body; and if there be any to complain of, certainly 'tis only our own ſelves.

5. And that's the fifth thing I propoſed to conſideration; for all this is occaſioned only by our own default: and it is not very eaſie to ſay, whether men be more condemnable for their wilful falling into ſuch an evil, or their complaining that means are uſed for their recovery. It is imprudent to hurt and miſchief themſelves, but it is much more to quarrel with the charity of thoſe that would help them.

Would men be pleaſed to live ſo like Subjects, as not to occaſion any fear or jealouſie to the Government, and would they pleaſe to keep themſelves in the Communion of the Church, and a regular obſervance of the Services and Miniſtries of Religion; they would never hear of any trouble, nor need to complain of any force or violence againſt them.

But if they will be heaving at Government, and will be factious, and innovate in Religion, the more eaſily and ſucceſsfully to accompliſh their other evil deſigns; they muſt thank themſelves, if the edge of the Law be turned on them; and if they be a little ſtricter held to their duty, they muſt blame only their own wilful neglect and diſregard of it. In this caſe they have none to complain againſt but themſelves: for Authority, if it have any regard to it ſelf, or any concern for them, cannot do leſs than it doth, without betraying it's own truſt, and caſting off all concern for thoſe that God hath given it the charge and care of.

6. But

6. But sixthly, there is another consideration to render mens complaints and murmurings against this procedure unjust; and that is, that they themselves have done the same thing, or worse, in the like or lesser cases.

Time was, when any one that did not swear as fast as they would have them and count their Covenant Religious and Sacred, should not only be Excommunicated, but Out-law'd, and put immediately from under the benefit and protection of Law.

And we have lately seen how forward these very persons that now complain, have been to put Tests upon all others; and to injoyn all in any Office or Place of trust, to receive the Sacrament, upon forfeiture of the Place, and a great sum besides.

And I wish I could not say, to the shame of some and their unanswerable reproach, how readily they could receive it, when their profit and interest invited them, though they complain and grumble, when it is made their duty; and labour to scare others from it under the notion of Superstition and Idolatry.

Interest (we may see) will easily answer all Objections, and be able to do more, than all the best arguments in the world besides. And were but the Sacrament now a Band and Cement of Union among themselves, a confederating the more closely to carry on their own purposes, or any way subservient to their design, we should hear of no complaints, nor invectives against any, but those that refused to obey and saving an Ordinance.

This is the plain truth of the thing; and if men be offended at it, we cannot help it, nor ought much to be concerned; and therefore it is a stark shame for those to complain against the present proceedings of Authority, who have gone before them in the same, and much worse. It is a hard thing for us to be *judged* by them who do themselves the very *same thing*.

7. And lastly, the complaining will be the more unreasonable, when it is no injury at all to them, upon their own principles; nor doing any thing to them, which they do not wilfully to themselves.

It is too evident what little respect these men bear to the Church, and how little they value the Communion of it: they separate themselves from it, and grow a downright Schism against it: and therefore what injury (I pray) can Excommunication be to such men? It is they that anticipate Excommunication, thrust themselves out of the Church, and defie it, and persist in plain contempt of it, and what Authority does, is little else than barely declaring what they have done before.

And I am verily perswaded, were it not for some consequences of it, and some prejudice that might redound from it to their Temporal concern, they would as little regard it, as they do the Church, deride it as *lenta fulmina*, and no more dread it, than men do fire painted upon a wall.

We that can hear men ridiculing the notion of a Church, and laughing at all the discourse about Communion with it, do very well know how little they value, or think themselves hurt, by being Excommunicated, and turned out of that, which they never desire to be of: they that can so lewdly confront all Antiquity, and in spight of all the Fathers of the Church, and Maxims of the Apostles too, teach *Salvation to be attainable to men out of the Church as well as in it*, certainly can never think themselves injured by being cast out of it; and all their Tragical complaints of Persecution in this, are but artifice and hypocrisie.

Men may be driven, indeed, to that which they do not love; but they are but compelled by that, which they do not much dread or fear.

2. The

2. The second thing proposed, is to inquire into the nature and measures of that compulsion, that the Laws and Precedents of the Gospel do warrant in this case; and then to try, whether the present proceedings of Authority against men, may not be justified upon them.

This is a thing the more needful to be stated with heed and caution, because the great Clamour is upon it. And two things with great confidence are urged by men, upon which they take upon them to censure the present proceedings of Authority, as wholly contrary to the Doctrine and spirit of the Gospel.

1. That it is not consonant to the Gospel to use any force at all to men in matters of Religion; and that nothing but Papal usurpation and cruelty hath introduced the practice of it.

2. That however, if there be any footsteps of force and rigour then, or that the Gospel mention any such thing, yet that rigour was purely Spiritual. Church-censures were her only Arms, and Excommunication the only punishment that she did inflict; but the Body and Estate, and the external concerns of men were untouched.

But (so say they) these are not now: did Authority content it self only to go thus far, we should bear it, and should have nothing to object against it; but now mens civil interests are touched, mens persons or purses may pay for it. There is a Writ *de Excipiendo Excommunicato*, and there are sharp Laws for punishing the contumacy of those, that obstinately refuse submission and compliance.

These are the popular, and (in some mens apprehension) very plausible exceptions against these things. It will therefore concern me therefore, clearly to state this matter. And if I can make these two things clear

in opposition to what is objected, I shall do enough in this.

1. That the Doctrine of the Gospel doth warrant the Exercise of force and rigour, in matters of Religion, where men will not be governed, and kept within due bounds, by the precepts and rules of it, and a conscience of their duty: and the History of it, and the Primitive times, do furnish us with examples and precedents enough of that rigour; and therefore that this was not introduced by Popish usurpation, as is pretended.

2. That these punishments were not purely Spiritual, but extended and reached to the persons, and external interests of men; both which suffered as much, or more than they do now.

If I can clear the truth and certainty of these two things, I shall fully satisfie the Objections, and lay a certain foundation to justifie the present proceedings of Authority upon.

To this therefore I now addres my self, with all the plainness and clearness that I can: beseeching any, especially that are under any dissatisfaction in these things, to consider honestly and impartially what I am going to say.

1. And first, that the Doctrine of the Gospel doth warrant the exercise of force and rigour in matters of Religion, where the Conscience of duty will not keep men in order. And that we are furnished with precedents and examples of this, I think is very clear to all that have either considered the constitution of the Christian Church, or taken notice of those Remarks of the Government of it, which they meet with in the New Testament.

1. If it would be sufficient conviction to some men, to argue this from principles of true reason, or from conse-

consequences that fairly and naturally offer themselves from premisses that are certain and uncontroverted among all men; it might be enough to put the matter upon that issue.

And then I would only consider what is granted on all hands, *viz.* That Christ hath founded himself a Church in the world; not contenting himself only to have persons come to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, to become Proselytes to the Christian Religion, and to be won over to the Faith of the Gospel.

But that he hath formed all these persons into a Society, cast them into one common Body, of which himself is the Head; made his Church a Spiritual Politie, and united all Christians as Members of it, by proper and strong bands and ligatures; and made the greatest part of their duty to consist, not so much in acting in a single and independent capacity, as in the discharge of those Offices that become them as members consociated, and united together in one common body.

For so we know the greatest part of Christian Religion consists in the publick worship of God and Christ, with one heart and one consent; the glorifying God with one mouth, and in meekness and love; in condescention and charity one to another, and a strict union and peace among themselves.

I need not stand arguing the truth of this; it is plain of it self in the New Testament, and confessed by all Sides and Parties of men at this day: though I must needs say, the serious belief and consideration of it, would alone umpire and issue most of the disputes that are among us, about Conformity, and Schism, and Separation at the present.

But I am sure it is a sufficient foundation for what I am undertaking to prove; and there are these two things that do most naturally and necessarily follow from it.

1. That

1. That therefore Christ hath vested this Church of his, with all that authority and power, that is absolutely necessary for the conservation of it self as a Body and a Society, *i. e.* for the preservation of order and agreement, and for their keeping all its members in a due regard to the Laws and Constitutions of it.

And this is so certain, as it is that Christ Jesus is good and wise, and one that would never defeat his own designs, nor command order and unity to be preserved in his Church, without induing it with that power which was absolutely necessary to that purpose.

It is so reflective upon the wisdom of a man, to cast men into society, and unite them under any Government, without contriving some effectual means for the preservation and maintenance of order among them as such, that we can't think it competent to the Son of God, without the highest blasphemy.

2. That therefore he hath vested his Church, and the Governours of it, with a power of inflicting punishments, and using rigour against its members, where the sense and conscience of their duty would not keep them in order.

There can be no doubt of this, nor any reason to question the certainty of it; for this power is also entirely necessary to the preservation of the Church: unless we do suppose that all the members of it are, and ever will be so conscientious and good, as to be kept within their compass, by a sense of their duty, and a respect to the great arguments that the Gospel uses to that purpose.

And I readily confess, that were all Christians such as they should be, and as the Laws of the Gospel require them to be, this power that I am contending for, might be thought unnecessary for the Church, and thereupon be argued not to be granted to it.

But

But alas, we see too clearly, that it is quite otherwise; and he that better knew what was in man than we, hath plainly told us, that it always was, and will be otherwise; and that he doth in representing it as a mixed multitude, as a parcel of ground wherein was stony, and barren, and thorny uncultivated land, as well as good, and well prepared; as a field wherein there were tares and weeds, as well as wheat and good grain; as a net cast into the sea, which brought up of every kind, and wherein were refuse and vile, as well as good and wholsome fish: all which you may see illustrated clearly, *Matth.* 13.

And we have clear Specimens of this truth in his own first collection of Disciples and followers; of the one of which we read of a great many at one time going off, and forsaking him; and of a *Judas* and a Devil even among the small company of his twelve Apostles.

And also in the first foundations of a Church that his Apostles laid after him, in one of which you read of an *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*; in another of a *Demas*; in one, of an Incestuous person, and Schismaticks, and in another, of those that walked *ἀτάκτως* disorderly, breaking their ranks, forsaking their proper station, and interfering upon anothers Office and Place; and St. *John* speaks of a great many of Apostates that went out from them, 1 *Joh.* 2. 19.

And the Apostles frequently warn us of false brethren and Apostates, of Seducers and Deceivers, and of men of the very worst Characters, that should yet have a form of godliness, and put on the name and vizor of Christianity.

And the truth is, as long as men are men, and continue in this imperfect state, we cannot expect it should be otherwise. There will be Hypocrites in the Church, and men that make Religion a design, and receive not

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the truth in love, but have by-ends and purposes of their own to serve, and when it serves these, will be ready to destroy, and cause Factions in the Church, and betray Religion, as well as at other times to profess great kindness to it: and for any thing I can see or learn from the Histories of the Church, it hath been as much pester'd and troubled by unruly disorderly members, as almost any other Collection or Society of men whatsoever.

Now to these it is plain, such a power as this is absolutely necessary; and it is not possible to keep them in order without it. Men that act not by Conscience, and a sense of duty, and whom the arguments of the Gospel, and the sense of immortality will not hold, nothing but the rod and external correction can take hold of.

And therefore the Church must either have power to punish them, and inflict such severities upon them as they regard, and can be restrained by; or else it must be left defenceless and unregarded, exposed to all their malice, and without any remedy against those mischiefs that Faction and unruliness always produce; *i. e.* it may at any time be in the power of her wicked members to work her ruine and disorder, and she be wholly destitute of any remedy to help her self against them.

Which if any man can believe to be according to the mind and constitution of Christ, he must at the same time believe, that Christ founded his Church in vain, or out of the greatest malice to her, in exposing her certainly to the assaults and injuries of her wicked and rotten members, without any ordinary means of defence against them.

2. Or secondly, if it would be sufficient to argue from those precepts and charges that are in the Apostolical writings, yea in the Gospel it self given to the Governours of the Church in general, *of feeding the flock, of keeping out those ravenous and greedy wolves that would*

would ſtrive to break in upon it, of watching over it, of ſilencing gain-ſayers, of ſtopping the mouth of thoſe that taught any other Doctrine, of convincing gain-ſayers, of ſharply rebuking the diſorderly and unruly, &c. many of which are written in almoſt all the Epiſtles.

I ſay, if we might argue from them, we might infer not only the lawfulneſs, but ſometimes the expediency and neceſſity of this power: for otherwiſe the members of the Church were commanded to do that, which were impoſſible to be done, and forbid the exerciſe of that power which was abſolutely neceſſary to the doing of that, which they had an expreſs charge to ſee to the doing of; which were ſomething worſe, and more tyrannical in their Maſter, than *Pharaoh's* exacting brick of the *Iſraelites* of old, without allowing them ſtraw to burn them with.

Theſe Conſiderations, and theſe Arguments from them, might be enough to iſſue this queſtion, and to convince all men, that act by Reaſon, and upon the principles of it. But to others, plain matter of fact will be more affecting; and thoſe that call upon us ſo loudly, to produce any example of this under the Goſpel, will be more ſatisfied by ſhewing them plain precedents of that, which we are pleading for, or expreſs places of Scripture to warrant the ſame.

And firſt, for a place of Scripture to warrant this upon, I think that of our Saviour, *Matth.* 18. 17. ſufficient, where he directs us, as the laſt remedy againſt a Brother that injures us, to tell the fact to the Church. Which though I confeſs it may intend only his higher conviction and ſhame, and a more probable way of inducing him fairly to repair the wrong; yet I doubt not but it means more, and is in effect an appealing to a higher Tribunal, whoſe commands ſhould he ſo diſregard, as to cauſe them to paſs cenſure upon him,

afterwards he should be reputed a *Heathen* and a *Publican*, forfeit all that respect and charity that he might otherwise expect and claim from us. And this interpretation I am the more confirmed in, because I find the same thing injoyned to an Excommunicated person, 1 *Cor.* 5. 9. and 2 *Thes.* 3. 14.

And that this was our Saviours meaning, may be strongly concluded from the consonant directions of his Apostles, who injoyn the exercise of such a power, in cases of Scandal and great Offences; as is plain in St. *Pauls* command to the *Corinthians*, in the case of the Incestuous person, 1 *Cor.* 5. 3, 4, 5. *For I verily have judged already concerning him that hath done this thing, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,* (i. e. that power which he hath given me) *to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh,* &c.

And this power he would have exercised also, not only against that single person, but equally against any other that is an incorrigible Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, 1 *Cor.* 5. 11.

And much what the same to this, he recommends to the *Thessalonians*, to be done to those that *walk disorderly*, as was just now hinted, and did not obey the directions of the Apostle to them, 2 *Thes.* 3. 6. 12. 14.

And consonant directions he gives to *Titus*, *Cap.* 1. 11. and particularly concerning a Heretick, *Cap.* 3. 10. *A man that is an Heretick after the first and second admonition reject*, i. e. Excommunicate.

And that the Apostles did themselves act according to this rule when occasion was, you have clear instances, in St. *Peters* censure upon *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, *Acts* 5. 5. 10. which example became of most excellent effect,

saith

ſaith St. *Luke*, to reſtrain all men from any the like ſins, v. 11. *Great fear came upon all the Church, and upon as many as heard theſe things*; who plainly perceived that the Apoſtles had a power to correct and puniſh them, if they did amiſs.

The like you read done by St. *Paul* againſt the Inceſtuous *Corinthian*, the caſe but now mentioned, 2 *Cor.* 5. 6. and alſo againſt *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 20. *whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaſpheme.*

And I think few things can be plainlier ſpoken of than this power is in ſeveral places in his Epiſtles to the *Corinthians*; particularly in theſe that follow. 1 *Cor.* 4. 21. *What will ye? ſhall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the ſpirit of meekneſs?* where by the Rod, *Grotius* and others underſtand the power of inflicting death, as upon *Ananias*; blindneſs as upon *Elymas* the Sorcerer, or other diſeaſes; making the word ῥάβδος the ſame with πληγὴ, or μάστιξ which ſignifie puniſhment, and corporal inflictions; for ſo, ſaith he, God then ſupplied the defect of that which Civil Magiſtrates ought to do againſt obſtinate offenders; and which was not done then, becauſe the Government was not become Chriſtian. 2 *Cor.* 10. 6. *Having in a readineſs to revenge all diſobedience*: and 2 *Cor.* 13. 10. *Therefore I write theſe things being abſent, leſt being preſent, I ſhould uſe ſharpneſs, according to the power which the Lord hath given to me*, i. e. that power of puniſhing obſtinate offenders with diſeaſes, and corporal puniſhments; as the ſame *Grotius*, and others with him, expound it.

So that if either plain directions for the exerciſe of ſuch a power, or inſtances of the actual execution of it, will convince men of the lawfulneſs of it, we ſhall not hear it any more queſtioned.

And it is so well known, that the Primitive Church thought these so good and full warrant for their doing the like, that it was commonly in all such cases exercised then, against notorious and scandalous offenders; and continued since in every age of it, even unto this day. And some Councels have expresly ordered it against the wilful neglect and contempt, nay the disuse of the Lords Supper in particular: which gives us a plain example and president of it, in that very particular case of ours, which we are now speaking of.

This I think is enough upon the first thing proposed, and sufficient to convince all, that the Gospel doth not allow every man in Christian Religion to act as he list, and to be under no rule but his own pleasure; but that it requires men to be subject to the Constitutions of the Church, and hath vested it with a power to compel men to observe the Institutions of Christianity, when the arguments thereof will not perswade them thereunto.

But this is the lesser part of my undertaking; for I believe few, when they consider better, will deny me this: for all sides allow it, and all sorts practise accordingly upon their own members. There is not the wildest and most confused Sect among them, that have come to any head, (no not the Quakers) but will exercise a power over their own members, and use rigor and constraint, where gentle means will not do. And therefore cannot quarrel with the exercise of Excommunication, without condemning themselves, as well as taxing the plain directions and warrant of the Gospel.

2. I have observed therefore, as an addition to this Consideration, and a full Answer to the Objection, that these penalties were not purely Spiritual, but did reach to the persons and external interests of men, both which did suffer as much, or more, than they do now; and if I can make

make this good, I suppose the Objection can desire no more, in order to its full answer and satisfaction.

To this therefore I shall now address myself; and in order thereto, I shall do these two things.

1. I shall consider some punishments inflicted in the Gospel, which were not only Spiritual, but did reach the body, yea the very life, and all other external interests of men.

2. I shall consider the nature of Excommunication in the time of the Apostles, and endeavour to prove that it was always attended with external corporal punishments in those times.

1. To begin with the first: there is mention in the New Testament of punishments inflicted by the Apostles upon offenders, that were not only Spiritual. Of this there is a most remarkable instance, *Acts* 5. the full story and all the circumstances of it are related from v. 1. to 12. The sum of the case was this. *Ananias* and *Sapphira* his wife sold an Estate, and pretended to bring the price of it into the common *Fiscus*, and Bank, to be imployed for the use of the whole body of Christians, as the manner then was; but it seems kept back part, for their own private use.

Some men perhaps in this age would be apt to think that it was no such great crime, and certainly it had not, had they dealt sincerely in the case, and not dissembled and cloaked it with a peremptory lye; without which, such an act of Charity now, would be thought so far from deserving a censure, that it would procure men the highest character for Religion, and insert their names into the golden Dypticks of the Church.

Yet notwithstanding this, St. *Peter* not only censures them highly for this, but punisheth them with death. And that you may be sure this was not Gods own immediate infliction only, & besides the intention and thought

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of St *Peter*, you may see him threatning it immediately to *Sapphira*, *v.* 9. *The feet of them that carried out thy Husband, shall carry thee out also*; upon which, straightway she falls down dead.

This was a startling instance indeed to let men see what a dangerous thing it was to violate the institutions of Christianity, and to act contrary to the practices of the Church, (for this failure, bating that hypocrisie and lye, was but in such a thing) and accordingly it did greatly affect men, and cause *great fear to come upon all the Church*, as you are told *v.* 11.

Another instance something like this, you meet with, 1 *Cor.* 11. 30. *For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep*; i. e. because of your profaning and contemning the Lords Supper, many of you suffer punishments and weaknesses in your body, and have diseases inflicted upon you, and some actually dye.

This is the more considerable, and ought to be the more affecting at present, because it is in the very instance, and for that particular fault, which our present Question is about, and for which men pretend it to be contrary to the Gospel to be punished; and that is in the neglect of the holy Sacrament, which certainly is every way as unchristian as the profanation of it, it being rather worse to neglect and disregard wholly an institution of Christianity, than to fail only in the way of performing it.

I do not understand why it should render this instance the less convictive, to reply, that we do not read that these punishments were inflicted by the Apostle, but immediately by God himself: for howsoever that were, yet

1. It lets us see, that such failures did deserve all these punishments, by whomsoever they were inflicted; unless we dare say, that God causelessly and unjustly afflicts the Sons of men.

2. It

2. It lets us understand, that that Apostle also was privy to the design of this providence, acquainted with the reasons of it; and so, in some kind of sense, of counsel with God in it.

3. And thirdly, it is plain he useth it as an argument to deter them from such things for the future; which had been very precarious and at random, unless he could assure them, that such punishments should, as well as they had been, be the effect and consequences of that sin: for if these things were wholly out of his power and cognizance, and depended solely upon the will and pleasure of God, he could not with any good reason and certainty, threaten them with them for the future; for we can't draw certain conclusions from Gods former dealings, nor conclude, *Because God hath done this, therefore he will do the same in the like case.*

These two instances of punishments relate to the body and life of a man plainly. I will only adde to them one, which extends as well to his Estate, and interests among men, and that is, 1 *Cor.* 5. 11. *But now I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a Brother be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, with such a one no not to eat.*

Where it is plain, by not keeping company, and not eating, the Apostle means to forbid all familiarity, all intercourse and dealing with such a man, all buying of, or selling to, and all manner of trading with him, shun him as a plague, and have no more to do with him, than with an infected person and a devil: and how dismal and calamitous the case of such a man must needs be, and how destructive this would be of all his interest and concern in the world, you will easily see.

I am very confident, that if punishments equal to any of these that I have named, were inflicted upon the con-

contemners of the Sacrament now, there would be strange outcries of cruelty, and tragical complaints of persecution; and the Governours of the Church would be rayled against, as unchristian, and men that did not act according to the rules of the Gospel: and yet you see these things were done in the purest times of the Gospel, and by those men too, that were immediately acted by a Divine Infallible Spirit.

2. But secondly, to these I shall adde another Observation, that will bring the matter home, and close to our present case; and that is, that Excommunication was not purely a Spiritual punishment, but attended with external inflictions, as great and terrible, or much more so than it is now.

That Excommunication was a common and ordinary punishment inflicted upon those unruly Christians, whom Conscience and a sense of duty could not keep in order; I have provid already, and I suppose shall not have it disputed or questioned by any, that I have now a controversie with.

The only question is, Whether this was any more than a Spiritual punishment, and went any further than to cutting men off from the Communion of the Church, and from those hopes of future Salvation that the members of it did expect; Whether it were not enough to exclude men from all hopes of Heaven, and consign them inevitably to Hell and eternal damnation, without the weak interpositon of corporal and external guilts and punishments.

Our Adversaries contend vehemently, that this was all that was in Excommunication of old, and that nothing was suffered after it. That this weapon of the Church was according to the language of St. *Paul, spiritual* only, and in no sense *carnal*, or affecting the flesh; and that therefore any prosecution of Excommunicate

persons,

persons, after that sentence, any inforcing the terror of it by external punishments, is wholly unscriptural, and contrary to the rule of the Gospel.

This part of the controversie therefore I am now going to undertake, and do not at all doubt but to prove, that this is a very gross (though I hope not wilful) mistake, and that Excommunication was attended with as great and terrible external sufferings then, as it can be now, nay much greater.

And this I shall endeavour to prove,

1. From the phrase and language in which this punishment is expressed in Scripture.

2. From the testimony of Antiquity, and learned men, in this instance.

1. I begin with the first, to consider the phrase under which the matter of Excommunication is expressed in the New Testament: and there are but these two places that at present I remember, in which this is purposely and fully done; and they are 1 *Cor.* 5. 5. & 1 *Tim.* 1. 20. in which the expression is exactly the same. In both places Excommunication is expressed by *delivering unto Satan*; only the end of this is a little variously expressed; in one it is added, *For the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.* In the other it is, *That they may learn not to blaspheme.* I shall consider these apart. 1. What Excommunication is here said to be. 2. What the end and purpose of it is. Both will be pertinent to my purpose, and be good proof of what I am contending for.

1. I consider the phrase that this censure is expressed in; and that is, *Delivering up unto Satan*; *To deliver such a one unto Satan*, and *Whom I have delivered unto Satan.*

By which expression we are to understand, not only the cutting off from the Communion of the Church,

the body of Christ, and the society of Men, that he hath Impaled to himself, and over which his extraordinary protection and providence watcheth.

But it means the putting men from under that common providence and protection of God, that guards all men; and the not only exposing them to the incursions and power of the Devil, but consigning them inevitably and infallibly to his malice and fury, to be tormented and afflicted by him.

For if it were only the first of these, then it were only the putting men into that estate, which all that embrace not the belief of the Gospel are in, and that which all Hereticks, Schismaticks, and Apostates inflict upon themselves; over whom yet the common providence of God watcheth, and saves from many evils, which through the malice of the Devil, and their own folly, they would certainly fall into. It would be abhorrent to Christian charity to say, that all such persons and Nations are thus given up to Satan, and that Divine providence neglects, and takes no care of them.

It means therefore the execrating and devoting persons immediately to the Devil, the putting them from under God's common providence, and not only exposing, but consigning them to the power and fury of that malicious mischievous spirit. And accordingly is interpreted by all learned men; from whence we may most certainly conclude, what external corporal tortures and buffetings and miseries they must fall into.

1. For were it only a pulling down the hedge of common protection and providence that guards all men, and exposing them to the incursions of the devil, to be dealt with as he pleases, we might easily presage the misery they would fall into.

We know what the malice of the Devil against poor Man is, and we read enough of the effects of his cruelty

cruelty and ſpight upon thoſe, he hath been let looſe upon.

Malice and ſpight is the very nature of the Devil, in whom it is in the moſt extream & conſummate degrees, and therefore can never be glutted with leſs than the utmoſt miſery that Man is capable of ſuffering. And it is moſt certain, that could that curſed ſpirit have his will, men ſhould not only be miſerable in the other world, but in this too; and in this as well as that, to the extremity of what their natures are capable of undergoing.

And we read enough to ſatisfie us of this, in thoſe unhappy and miſerable perſons that he hath had liberty of afflicting. You may read what he did to poor *Job*, when God put him into his hands; and you may read alſo, to what aſtoniſhing meaſures he afflicted and perſecuted the bodies of thoſe poor *Demoniacks* that are mentioned in the Goſpel; now torturing them in one ſad faſhion, and then in another; now caſting them into the fire, and then into the water; ſometimes bowing their bodies, and binding their head and neck even together; ſometimes caſting them down upon the ground, and making them miſerably to tear, and gaſh, and cut themſelves; and all of them to become ſad and miſerable ſpectacles unto all that looked on them.

Nay, we read his malice and envy againſt Man is ſo great, that nothing belonging to him, or for his comfort, ſhould eſcape his fury. *Job*'s Sheep and Oxen are conſumed; and the ſtory in the Goſpel tells us, that not ſo much as a herd of Swine (might he have his will) but ſhould be drowned in the ſea, by his Legion of apoſtate malicious ſpirits.

2. But leſt we ſhould think it not to be for the Devils intereſt to torture all that were Excommunicated, and caſt out of the Church, that being one likely way

to make men more careful to keep in it, and that his intereſt in this might poſſibly over-rule his malice, and therefore to expoſe men only to his incurſions, would not prove a certainty of his tormenting them preſently.

Therefore ſecondly, we muſt know that this delivering over unto Satan, was not only expoſing, but conſigning them over unto his power, with a command to torture and afflict them; not only like a Kings outlawing of a Rebel, but following him with a Proclamation, in which every man that can, is commanded to ſeize and apprehend him; and conſigning him over into the hands of Juſtice, to be puniſhed according to the demerits of his crime.

The Devil doubtleſs is ready enough to do miſchief to any perſon, whenever he can: but here in this caſe, he is not only at liberty, but under a command to do it. It is delivering to him, as to a common Lictor, whoſe very place and office it is to ſcourge and puniſh Malefactors, and who is under obligation to inflict on them that puniſhment, that the Law hath ſentenced them unto. In this caſe the Devil is Gods Executioner; and what reſtraint ſoever his ſubtilty and ſpight againſt God might lay upon his ill nature, yet in this, he is under authority, and can no more not puniſh when God commands, than he can puniſh when he forbids.

Thus the very phraſe in which Excommunication is expreſſed, doth ſufficiently imply, that it is not only a ſpiritual puniſhment, it being a delivering over unto Satan, whoſe ſpight and malice vents it ſelf againſt the bodies, as well as the Souls of men, who, might he have his will againſt man, and the utmoſt that his deviliſh malice could deſire, would leave no part of Man untouched, nor any thing to be the leaſt comfort to him; but would even antedate his Hell here, and render him

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as compleatly miſerable now, as he ſhall be hereafter.

But who (to be ſure) will do this, when the Almighty lays this burthen upon him: for he is under the command of God; (as 'tis happy for us that he is) and can no more forbear doing what he commands him, than do any thing which he reſtrains him from.

But this will be more clear, from what is ſaid to be the end and purpoſe of this *delivering unto Satan*, which in one place is ſaid to be *for the deſtruction of the fleſh, that the ſpirit may be ſaved in the day of the Lord Jeſus*; In the other, *that they may learn not to blaſpheme.*

From whence it is plain, that this puniſhment was medicinal, and intended, as the ſame Apoſtle ſpeaks, 2 *Cor.* 13. 10. *to edification, and not to deſtruction*; not barely a puniſhment to revenge the reproach and injury done unto Religion upon the offender, but deſigned to a merciful and good end, to effect his repentance and amendment, as all Gods puniſhments in this world are. *Leſt being preſent I ſhould uſe ſharpneſs, according to the power that Chriſt hath given me, to edification, and not to deſtruction.*

Now this being clearly declared to be the end and purpoſe of this infliction, it will be eaſily apprehended that there was ſomething in it proper to effect this end; which cannot be thought to be any thing elſe, but ſome external Corporal puniſhment, which is the only thing that is of any force and efficacy with men of ſuch tempers.

For I would fain know, what other thing we can imagine to be in this puniſhment, ſo probably and directly effective of this good end, as this.

Shame and ſorrow for being caſt out of the Congregation of Chriſt, put from under Gods common providence and care, expoſed to the incurſions of the Devil, and

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cut off from all hopes of future happiness, are things very proper to bring a man to repentance, and such as Excommunication may possibly effect in men, *i. e.* if they do seriously consider and reflect upon their condition.

But to imagine that this was all that was in this punishment towards the *destruction of the flesh, the saving of the spirit*, and *the learning not to blaspheme*, is very unreasonable, upon many accounts.

1. For first, these effects were but barely possible at most; it was possible such a man might be ashamed and humbled, but it was as possible that he might not be so: and to think that the Apostles would inflict so great a censure upon so great an uncertainty, or that the last remedy the Church had against obstinate and profligate Christians, was only fortuitous, might possibly do some good, and as possibly none at all, is a conceit that many great reasons combine together against.

2. And secondly, there is nothing in Excommunication directly effective of this sorrow and shame, but only by the mediation of a sober consideration, and reflecting upon a mans present condition. It's true, did a man well weigh what a condition he was then put into, it might by the grace of God, effect sorrow and shame, and great remorse in him, which might issue into repentance.

But so would the considering and reflection upon his obstinate and scandalous life have done the same before, without Excommunication.

Considering after-Excommunication could tell him no more of his dangerous condition, than it would before: for if he had any sense of Religion upon him before, he could not but know, what the effects of sin, and a vitious life, would certainly be; and if he had not that sense of Religion, he would as little believe them, or regard them, after Excommunication, as before it.

3.

3. Nor thirdly, do I see any thing in Excommunication and delivering to Satan, were there nothing but this in it, much more likely to awaken these thoughts and reflexions upon such a man, than what he enjoyed, and was used to him before.

For he did live under the ministration of the Gospel, where the terrors of the Lord were made known to him, and where he heard what the fate of obstinate and flagitious sinners was sure to be. Nay, and farther than this, he usually (at least) did injoy the benefit of both private and publick advice, and admonition, was often told of his wickedness, and warned of the danger of it (for in that method it is certain the Primitive Church did proceed with offenders, and the Church doth imitate the same to this day). And if all those things could not occasion these thoughts, I do not see that there is any thing in this punishment (supposing it to be only Excommunicating) more likely or powerful to do it.

4. For fourthly, the persons upon which this punishment was usually inflicted, were obstinate and notorious offenders, such as had fronted and braved all former reproofs and methods used for their amendment.

Thus it more than probably was in those two first instances of those delivered to Satan; but thus it certainly was in all others afterwards. The incestuous *Corinthian* had avowed his sin, and persisted in his incestuous cohabitation; for had he confessed the guilt, and separated from her whom he had incestuously taken, he would doubtless have been pardoned before this delivery to Satan, as well as he was upon these things absolved afterwards.

And so (it's very likely) it was with *Hymenæus* and *Alexander*, one persisting in his deriding the Doctrine of the Resurrection, and future Judgment; and the o-

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ther in the trouble that he gave to the Apostle in his Ministry, notwithstanding milder ways of reforming both of them.

And it is certain, this was the usual method of the Church with such persons; first to try all fair means, exhortation, reproof, and admonition, first in private, and then publickly; and when these failed, then to fly to this as the last remedy.

And what a little this was likely to effect upon men of such daring and obstinate tempers, (were there no more in it) may easily be conjectured. They that could defie and brave all the exhortations and threatnings of the Church, and its power, would easily do the same to the execution thereof; nor be much moved by being cast out of the Communion of that, which they so lightly regarded the power and constitution of.

5. Nay, I adde, fifthly, that this was so unlikely to effect this Repentance and Salvation, that it was the most probable and certain way to the plain contrary.

If delivering over unto Satan signified no more, but only casting out of the Communion of Christs Church, putting from under Gods protection, and the influences of his grace, and exposing them to the Devil to be dealt with as he pleased;

Then, instead of being saved, they should more certainly be damned; instead of learning not to blaspheme, they should be put upon doing it so much the more. And this, instead of being medicinal, and to their edification, would be the more certain consignation of them to eternal damnation.

For sure no man can think, that the Devil when he is left to his own will, will be instrumental to any mans Happiness and Salvation; nor that he will turn a preacher of Righteousness, and an instructer in the paths of ver-

vertue and amendment, whose malice against mankind is implacable, and all whose study is, to betray men into vice and wickedness, and to render them as uncapable of eternal happiness as himself, and to plunge them remedilesly into damnation that is prepared for the Devil and his Angels.

Might the Devil have his purpose upon Man, the flesh should always be rampant, and captivate the spirit, and both should be damned in the day of the Lord Jesus; and mens Tongues should be set on fire by Hell, and they should blaspheme the God of Heaven, with as black and rankerous a malice, as his Apostate Legions.

And delivering up to Satan, were this the only meaning of it, were the direct way to put him into a power of effecting that with ease, which he is at so much trouble and artifice in endeavouring to accomplish: instead of being an act of saving, it were the surest way of destroying men, and so far from being an act of kindness and discipline, it were an expression of the greatest rigour and severity in the world; it would finally defeat its own purpose, and put men into a desperate condition, even before the great time of despair commenced, which is very rarely, or never until death.

6. But now in the last place, if we interpret the delivery unto Satan in the sense that I have been contending for, *i. e.* that it was a putting men into his power to be buffeted and afflicted with Diseases and corporal punishments, (as *Job* was, as St. *Chrysostome* interprets that expression) then we both see, that this was used to edification, and what a great propriety and direct efficacy there is in it to produce the purpose it was designed unto.

There is nothing so fit for obstinate men as a whip, nor any thing so likely to reclaim them, as smart and suffering: a bridle is for the mouth of the Horse and

Mule, and a rod for the back of an incorrigible fool; reproof is loſt upon a ſcorner, and ſo are all ſober and gentler methods to a man of a perverſe mind.

This hath always been the way of Gods Providence, and ſtrivings with man: thoſe that make themſelves beaſts, muſt be reclaimed in a way ſutable to beaſts, which is with hardſhip and ſtripes.

And as this ſeems proper, ſo it is often ſeen to be accordingly ſucceſsful. As God ſpeaks of the wild Aſs in the wilderneſs, that ſnuffs up the wind, and ſcorns to come under the diſcipline of any, *yet in her month we ſhall find her, Jer.* 2. 24. ſo it is commonly with the moſt obſtinate men; affliction often makes them ſtoop, who ſcorned all gentler means of reformation; and corporal ſmart and puniſhment, often reduces that man to ſober thinking, who hated a ſerious thought, and was as far from it as the ſole of an Aſs.

We ſee this experienced every day; pains and ſuffering pull down the proud and haughty tempers of men, correct the wild and extravagant gayeties of their ſpirits, intenerate and ſoften their ſpirits, clear their eyes from the miſts that proſperity caſt before them, let them ſee the truth of things, and like the great *Aſſyrian*, to bow to the Almighty, who a little before were apt to rival both his power and glory too.

This therefore was the method that God tryed with obſtinate offenders in the Primitive times of Chriſtianity; & therefore while the Church wanted the favor of the Civil Magiſtrate, & had not power to inflict puniſhments upon men, God was pleaſed to ſupply that defect this way, and make Satan the common Lictor and executioner of puniſhment upon thoſe, whom gentler methods would not reſtrain, and prevail upon.

Theſe things I think are ſufficient to the purpoſe I have ſpoken them, to let men ſee how terrible the effects

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of Excommunication were in the times of the Gospel; and that whatever evil consequences the Laws of our Nation have made appendant to it now, are not so terrible as these were, and consequently that there is not so much cause to cry out against this procedure with men, as unchristian, and contrary to the rules or practice of the Gospel, and Apostles of Christ.

2. And that this notion is true, might further be proved from the testimony and judgment of men of great Authority and Credit in the Church of Christ, both Ancient and Modern, were there any need of it. Such for instance are St. *Augustine*, St. *Chrysostome*, St. *Hierom*, of old; and such as *Grotius*, *Capellus*, *Hamond*, and almost all the most Learned men of late, who all unanimously contend, that this was the sense of delivering up unto Satan, and these the effects that usually followed Excommunication in the Primitive times, while the Church was destitute of the protection of the Civil Magistrate, and had not the power of making Laws externally to punish obstinate offenders.

The Learned Reader, for his fuller satisfaction, may at leisure consult the Quotations in the Margine.

St. *Ignatius* in his Epistle to the *Romans*, calls his sufferings πειλημα τῦ διαβόλυ.

St. *Chrysostom in Hom.* 15. *in primam ad Corinthios*, οὐκ ἐλάττων σωφρονίσμος ἔσται τῦτο τῆς ἀγρυπνίας. Ἰὼβ γοῦν. To the destruction of the flesh, i. e. as was done to holy *Job*. And a little after, ἵνα μερίξῃ αὐτὸν ἕλκει ποινῷ ἢ νόσῳ ἑτέρᾳ. That he might afflict him with some sore Ulcer, or other Disease.

St. *Ambrose*, *lib.* 10. *de pœnitentia*, inquiring how the Incestuous *Corinthian* was delivered to Satan, answers thus: *Sicut Dominus in animam sancti Job non dedit potestatem, sed in carnem ejus permisit, ita & hic traditur Satanæ.*

St. *Hierome*, *in cap.* 5. *ad Galatas*: *Præcipit eum tradi pœnitentiæ in interitum & vexationem carnis, per jejunia & egrotationes.*

The Author of the Commentary upon the first to the *Corinthians*, commonly (though as some say falsely) ascribed to St. *Hierome*, upon *cap.* 4. *ult.* hath these words: *Qualivirgâ veniam ad vos? &c. Quali Petrus venit ad Ananiam & Sapphiram, & Paulus ad Magum.*

And this expression, *The destruction of the flesh*, he renders by *carnis angustias, & detrimenta membrorum.*

And *Facian in Epist.* 3. *ad Sempronian*, hath the same words.

Theodoret in locum, &c. ἡ δὲ ἀμέλεια παρεδίδου τὸ σῶμα· τῇ γὰρ ψυχῇ πῶς ἂν παιδεύσας κρατήσωμεν ἀφράστων ἀλλοκότων.

Cajetanus *in locum*: *Hinc apparet punitionem hanc fuisse vexationem corporalem, etiam usque ad mortem non tamen repentinam.* In which perhaps he may be mistaken, and as to the Incestuous person, certainly was; yet herein he follows St. *Augustine*, who *lib.* 6. *de Sermone Domini in Monte*, seems to question whether this did not extend unto death.

Answerable to these, you will find these following Learned persons, as you have them in the large Critics printed at *London*.

Vatablus *in primam ad* 1 Cor. 5. 5. *ut carnè afflictus resipiscat. Clarius in locum terminum præfigit Satanæ, ut corpus tantum tangeret, uti in* Job *factum erat.* Jacob. Capellus *in locum*, who gives an instance of the like punishment, and immediate seizure by Satan, out of the Life of *St. Ambrose*, written by *Paulinus. Grotius in locum: Nempè ut per eum morbis vexetur.*

To these may be added *Aquinas in locum*, if we think he can add any moment to the judgment of those that we have named before him.

In the close of which, I may add the Authority of our own *Hammond*, whose Judgment is, and will be valued, as long as sound Learning flourisheth in the world; and he in his Note E on 1 *Cor.* 5. contends for the reasonableness of this Exposition.

And because *Calvins* Authority may be of credit more than they all, with some men, I therefore produce him in the last place, who both in his Exposition upon this place, and in his Institutions too, doth not deny these to have been the effects of Excommunication in the Apostles time; only contends that that was not all that was intended in this expression, as he chargeth *St. Chrysostome* and others (though I do not see for what reason) to have said was.

And now after these things, I do not well know what is wanting to our purpose, unless it be to examine some Objections against this notion of delivering to Satan, and to satisfie some scruples about it; to which I shall address my self, that I may leave every thing as plain as I can. And there are three or four things that will require a particular consideration, in order to this.

1. And first, it may be demanded, Why are these effects of Excommunication now ceased? there appears nothing of this nature now, nor hath for a long time; what's the reason therefore, if there were such things, why we see nothing like them now?

To which Question an Answer may be given out of what was hinted but just before; That these extraordinary effects lasted only till the Government of the Empire turned Christian.

Till then indeed it was necessary that the Church should have some such power, to inforce Excommunication, and render it terrible and effective to obstinate offenders. But when the Governours and Civil power became Christian, then they might use the Temporal Sword, to back the Spiritual, and inforce these Censures of the Church with external punishments, and thereby do that, which God did by this extraordinary means.

And

And therefore, as when the Children of *Iſrael* of old, came into the plentiful land of *Canaan*, that Manna ceaſed by which they had been fed in a barren wilderneſs: ſo when the Church was protected by the Civil power, and the Laws of men could do that, which an extraordinary providence had done to that time, then God was pleaſed to withdraw the ſame, and leave men to their own conduct, when they were able to govern themſelves.

For God was never ſo laviſh and prodigal of doing Miracles, as ſome men would make him. As he never ſuffered a Miracle to be effected, but upon ſome very great reaſon; no more did he ever interpoſe, or uſe an extraordinary power to effect that, which the power of nature, and ſecond cauſes were ſufficient for.

When Kings and Emperours therefore became nurſing Fathers to the Church, (according to the ancient Propheſie) made Laws for the Government and Protection of it, and backed thoſe Laws with Sanctions of grievous puniſhments, made the intereſt of Religion their own, and guarded the peace and order of the Church with the ſame vigilancie and care, that they did their Kingdoms; then there was no ſuch great need of theſe extraordinary interpoſitions of providence to this purpoſe, as was formerly, and therefore they ceaſed. Juſt as the power of Miracles, which was a long time continued in the Church, yet ceaſed afterwards, when the truth and Divinity of Chriſtian Religion was ſufficiently atteſted, and could be maintained without them.

2. But then ſecondly, it may be demanded, Why there is ſo very little account, and ſo very few inſtances of this to be found in the Hiſtory of the Church? ſure a thing of this nature, muſt have been much taken notice of, had there been any ſuch; and it is very ſtrange that there ſhould be ſo little account of it.

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The truth of what is here objected muſt be acknowledged, unleſs there be more examples of this thing, than I have yet either by reading, or converſing with Learned men, been able to diſcover.

But yet this I think may fairly be accounted for: 1. For firſt, it is certain, and greatly lamented by Learned men, that we have but very little of the Hiſtory of thoſe early times of Chriſtianity come to us; whether it be from the iniquity of time, or of men; whether from the rage of War, or ſpight of Enemies, the artifice of Hereticks, or the induſtry of thoſe men, who can as eaſily ſuppreſs ancient Records, as falſifie and corrupt them; or from what other cauſes it hath proceeded, I know not: but the truth of the thing is too plain, and we might be aſſured of it (had our ſelves never made inquiry) by conſulting the Labours of the beſt Antiquaries, and the moſt curious and unwearied ſearchers into Primitive times. Here and there ſome very great thing they have picked up, ſo as to be able to patch up a Hiſtory of ſome great mens Lives; but alas, far enough from the exactneſs and fulneſs that they deſerved: and any competent account of thoſe times would have enabled them to have done.

And therefore I no more wonder that we have ſo little account of this, than that we have ſo little too of many others, which it would much have advantaged us to have had.

2. And yet perhaps a good reaſon may be given for this, even more than for ſome other things. As for example: It may well be ſuppoſed that this puniſhment was very rare, nor was there much occaſion to make uſe of it; thoſe times were famous for Piety and zeal to Religion; thoſe good men needed not to be whipped to their duty; their own fervours, and the rage of their Enemies kept them cloſe to it; and they were

were so exercised with almost daily and continual sufferings for their Religion and their Lord, that they had no leisure or temptation to grow wanton against the Laws, and constitutions of either.

And they were so taken up with recording their own sufferings, and transmitting accounts of them (as they used) to other Churches, that they forget to record almost any thing else: and the truth is, the giving account of the brave actions, and glorious sufferings of their Martyrs and Confessors, together with some few Apologies for themselves and their Religion, is almost all that we have left us of those times.

3. But thirdly, it may yet further be urged, that we may point to a space in the Primitive times, before the Government became Christian, when some Christians became very troublesome and Schismatical, when this punishment would have been proper, and in all likelihood of most effect to chastise those, whom all gentler methods were unsuccessful with.

And yet we do not read any thing, that this remedie, and these punishments were made use of. Such was the time in which that great man St. *Cyprian* lived, who was much harrassed and vexed with the petulancie and faction of some Priests, and others in their carriage towards the lapsed, (as they called those that fell in times of persecution) and in whose time the *Novatian* Schism broke out, which so troubled the Church. Now this was a proper time for this great punishment, and these effects of it would very likely have done much good.

This is an Objection which seems to come roundly up to the matter, and doth require satisfaction; which I shall endeavour to give to it, in these following considerations.

1. It is certain, that this extream and highest punishment was but very rarely used, or inflicted upon men;

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and (indeed I think I may say) scarce ever; but when the lesser intermedial censures of the Church were ineffectual and despised; such were excluding men from the full Communion of the Church, and imposing such Penances upon them, as they judged the nature of their offences to require.

2. St. *Cyprian* did use all fair ways to direct and inform these erring Priests; yea, some of the Confessors themselves, nay even the Martyrs, who granted Letters of Communion to many of these *lapsi*, before they had satisfied the Church: and threatned to use the censures of the Church against them, if they did not reform; and by that means did happily effect his purpose on many of them; and the business of Re-baptizing of them, which this controversie after grew into, was a matter of question and dispute, but not of any ill manners in the Church.

3. It is plain, when all other means failed with *Novatus*, and he still persisted, or rather grew more Factious and Schismatical; St. *Cyprian* had Excommunicated him, and inflicted this highest censure upon him, had he not fled into another Country; which slight of his, shewed clearly what a mighty dread he had of that punishment.

And that being the common practice of notorious and great Offenders, of all resolvedly Factious and Schismaticks at that time, as is plain in many instances, and particularly of *Privatus* and his followers, (in St. *Cyprians* time also) is to me a farther clear Indication of this thing, what a mighty dread and horror they had of this punishment: for otherwise, what needed they have fled away? for the Church had no power to punish them in their Estates or Bodies any other way; and therefore had they not feared this, they might have stayed, and defied all the Church could do to them.

4. And

4. And fourthly, if there be any instance producible of this not being used, and these effects following, when the party was desperately fallen into sin, and yet might be reached,

It was perhaps for this only reason, because they thought Schism a sin so odious and provoking, and of such a monstrous guilt, that the committer of it scarce came within the compass of common charity: his case was hopeless, and his sin scarce to be forgiven, or prayed for; and therefore that he forfeited the charity of the Church, in using means for his recovery; and those were never to be admitted to the Communion of the Church again, who wilfully cut off themselves from it: they had given themselves over to Satan in one sense, and it was needless for the Church to do it in another.

And that this is not only a conjecture, may be concluded from the great sense that those good Fathers (and particularly St. *Cyprian* himself) had of the guilt and evil of Schism, calling it almost the impardonable sin, so extreamly flagitious and its guilt so transcending, that nothing, no not Martyrdom it self, was able to expiate, or atone for it.

They had either no hopes that the guilt of it would be forgiven, or that the schismatick could repent, and be reformed; and therefore did not use this last remedy, but left him off as desperate.

5. But yet in the fourth place, it may be farther urged, Why was it, that afterwards this form was left off? yea, forbid to be used in Excommunication? for so learned men have observed, that this form of Excommunication grew in some Centuries into disuse; yea, and tell us, that the Synod of *Arles* in *France*, did forbid this expression of delivering over unto Satan, or that of *Anathema Maranatha* to be used any more in Excommunication.

But I do not see any thing in this observation to weaken our former notion of delivering to Satan, but rather very much to confirm it; for there are two accounts that may be given of this.

1. That now there was no need of this, nor of those direful effects that were of old to inforce Excommunication, and the terror and the effect of it.

As I said before, the powers of the world had submitted to the Scepter of Christ, and the Government was become Christian. Laws were made for the protection and peace of the Church, and backed with sanctions of sharp punishments, which would supply the want of these buffetings from Satan, and effect that which they were designed for.

And therefore to do this now, and expect such consequences from it, would be to tempt God to do a Miracle without cause, and to effect that by an immediate interposition of his providence, which ordinary means would do without it.

And in the end to expose their severest censures to contempt and scorn, when these effects did not follow, which they threatned by them.

2. They left off this in pure compassion and charity to the offender, and that they might not minister the least occasion of despair and despondencie unto him.

The *Anathema Maranatha*, was the severest form of their highest censures, and never used but against desperate offenders, whom they gave up as utterly hopeless, and never received to Communion again. And to have used this in Christian Excommunication, would have been contradicting the very end and design of it, which was the Reformation and amendment of the transgressor, and shutting the door of the Church and of Heaven too for ever against him, who by this means they intended only the better to fit and prepare to enter in at both.

And

And to have used the form of giving up to Satan, might (they were afraid) sound of too much severity, and perhaps render the man desperate, and hopeless of ever getting out of his clutches, who had always had too much power over him, but now by this penal delivery to him, would have much more.

But the first reason for this is sufficient; and whether I be out in assigning this second or no, it matters not.

This is abundantly sufficient (I think) to the final clearing up of what I undertook to prove, That Excommunication in the Apostles times, was not only a Spiritual punishment, but attended frequently with corporal external punishments, as severe, nay more terrible than any that the Laws of this Kingdom have been pleased to back it withal.

I shall only add one thing farther, *i. e.* to give a form of Excommunication used after this expression of delivering to Satan was left off; to let you see how sharp and severe it was, and into what evil circumstances he that suffered it was brought. It is commonly taken notice of by Learned men, and was inflicted by *Synesius* upon *Andronicus* the Præfect of *Ptolemais*; and these are the words done into English: *Let no Temple be open to* Andronicus *and his followers. Let every Oratory and Sanctuary be for ever shut against them. We warn all private men, and all Magistrates, that they sit not at the same Table, that they come not into the same house with them, and that they shun all company or converse with them, as they would do infection and the Plague. And all Priests especially we charge, that they neither speak to them while they live, nor allow them rites of Christian Burial when dead.*

This I think was severe and sharp enough; and when men consider that over and besides this, the Civil Laws took notice of them, and punished them, perhaps in-

stead of raylng against the severity of the Church and Government of *England* in this matter, they may learn to acknowledge the great clemency and mercy of the same.

And now I come to put a period to this discourse, in some short Reflections, and Addresses, especially to those, that want information in these things.

1. That men would seriously consider what a monstrous instance of degeneracy it is, to need Laws and correction to force them to such a service of Christianity as the Holy Sacrament is.

Oh, how is the true spirit of Christianity lost! and how different is our temper in this, from those good men that have gone before us! they flocked into this service, just as Doves to their windows, (to use the prophetical Scheme of speaking) and needed no more courtship to come to this Feast, than hungry men do, to still their sharp and croaking appetite.

Some of them called this their *daily bread*; and in the Primitive times it was almost as frequent as their daily repasts.

Those good Fathers of old were not put to the trouble of inviting or perswading men to come, but to restrain them rather of the two. Men came fast enough of their own accord, and their business was to endeavour they were duely qualified and fitted to come; all their work was to strike an awe and reverence into them, and to heighten their sense of what they went about. To which purpose there are such high and lofty things said of the mysteriousness and sacredness of this service above any others, and such great pains taken to direct men in all the methods of preparation for it, and inforcing the observation of those methods, by suggestions of that mighty danger and guilt of unduely coming to that Ordinance.

Which

Which things (by the way let me tell you) ſome guides of Souls in theſe later Ages of the Church, I think, have ſomething unreaſonably inſiſted upon, and thereby driven people into an extream on the other hand, and cauſed them to conclude it ſafer not to come at all, than to incur and hazard ſo great a danger by coming unworthily.

This is a ſore evil indeed, and I dare not ſay but the imprudence (or at leaſt unſeaſonableneſs) of ſome mens inſiſting ſo much upon theſe methods of the Ancient Fathers, hath been contributive to it.

The Fathers are excellent guides to us, and we may follow them; but then ought to conſider the reaſons upon, and the purpoſes to which they ſpake many things, and not to make uſe of their ſayings, till the ſame reaſons and purpoſes call upon us.

Had they lived in our days, I am confident they would have ſpoken at another rate, and have been as earneſt in perſwading and convincing men of their duty, as they were in directing of it; been as ſharp upon thoſe that refuſed to come at all, as they were upon thoſe that neglected to come ſo preparedly as they ſhould.

I ſpeak not this to remit any mans care in fitting himſelf for this: God forbid! but we have a different task now upon us; and I tell you plainly, I would rather men ſhould come, though they be not ſo exactly fitted, than that they ſhould not come at all. I am ſure it is better to do our duty, though it be imperfectly; than wholly to neglect and diſregard it. I would (and by Gods aſſiſtance will) direct men as well as I can, how to come like Chriſtians and good men, duely prepared for this, but I would not *beat the aire* in doing this, until I had convinced men that it is really their duty to come.

But to return to my purpoſe: what a ſymptome is it of a faint, and almoſt dying Religion in men, to need to be contended with, or compelled in this inſtance! Thoſe

Thoſe good Chriſtians of old (that I have been ſpeaking of) could not be reſtrained by the ſharpeſt Laws from this ſervice, but muſt daily *ante-lucano tempore* (ſaid the great *Pliny*) riſe before day to do it, though it was made death by the Law to do ſo.

Our good Fathers in the times either of Queen *Mary*, or the late Rebellious Uſurpers, what would not they have given for half that liberty that we enjoy! who ventured their lives, and whatever can be dear to men, rather than neglect this ſervice.

Lord! what are we to theſe, who need Laws to drive us, and yet will not be driven neither? what a ſtrange unhappy peeviſh temper are we of? we neglect to go when there are no Laws to compel us, and we refuſe to go when there are: when we are indulged and left to our liberty, then we neglect and diſregard it; and when the Laws are awakened, then we complain, and ſay we ought not to be forced, but left to our liberty. Nothing will pleaſe us, nothing ſhall work upon us; we refuſe our food, or convert it into poyſon; the means that ſhould reform us, make us worſe; and what our Governours uſe as a method to perſwade us, we uſe to a quite contrary purpoſe, and make an argument for our not being perſwaded and prevailed with.

2. What peeviſh frowardneſs is this? yea, what mighty folly and weakneſs! I would we would conſider that in the ſecond place. We have been told that this ſervice is our neceſſary duty, and tyed upon us by as expreſs and plain precepts as any other ſervice in the Goſpel, & therefore it were folly to need any compulſion to it. But we are aſſured, it is as much our intereſt as it is our duty, and greatly conducive to all the intereſts of our Souls. What weak people are we then, that need to be beaten to our own good? and like Children, cry & make a ſtir when we are dreſſed, or called to our meat.

Conſider it in the caſe of the Parable, that I have related

lated unto; it was a Feaſt, a Royal Entertainment that they were invited unto; nothing but kindneſs and benefit to them was intended; and yet we are much more our own enemies than they were; for perhaps they had meat enough of their own at home, and perhaps as good too.

But alas ſo have not we; what have we of our own to feed and ſupport our ſelves upon? either nothing, or nothing comparable to what we have here, where our Souls may be feaſted, with the ſurprizing and raviſhing pleaſures of God's love, and the love of our dear Lord, and nouriſhed with the Divine Graces of the Holy Spirit; to which any thing that we have at home, either in the entertainments of the world, or vice, are fiction and dream, yea *Aconite* and deadly wine.

3. Therefore inſtead of blaming our Superiours, and quarrelling with the Laws, that would compel us to come, let us ſee if we ought not rather to blame our ſelves, and reproach our own fooliſh temper, that needs all this adoe, and makes force neceſſary for us. Had we that ſenſe of our duty that we ſhould, and would we do it as became wiſe and good men, we ſhould never hear of Law, or need to fear it.

But it is the neglecting, nay obſtinate reſolving againſt this, that makes us uneaſie, or draws any ill circumſtances upon us; we have none to complain of but our ſelves, nor any thing done to us, but what is neceſſary, unleſs our Governours muſt draw the guilt of our ruine upon their own heads, in neglecting to do what they can, & what they ought for the avoiding of it.

4. Whoſe care, I think, in the laſt place, we ought rather to take kindly and thankfully, than ſtand quarrelling and murmuring againſt it; inſtead of repining and complaining againſt our Governours, fall down upon our knees, and bleſs God that ſuch care is taken of us.

That we are not left only to our own arbitrary will

and

and conduct, but that we have Fathers that conſult for us, as we do for our own Children; who give them not up only to their own wild untutored paſſions and judgements, but conſult for them, and tye them to thoſe methods which we know good for them, though they do not think ſo themſelves.

We have ſeen by too ſad an experience, how unable moſt men are to govern themſelves aright in matters of Religion; what the effects of indulging, and leaving men only to their own liberty are; and we ſhould certainly ſoon ſee the ſame or worſe again. O Lord! what extravagancies and follies are there ſo rank and wild, that ungoverned men will not run into, when they are indulged, and left wholly to themſelves!

What then do we not owe to the Divine Providence, that hath ſet us under Government both in Church and State? yea, and what acknowledgments are big enough to be made to thoſe, that conſider our temper, and conſult for our good, do all they can to ſave us, and to reſtrain us from deſtroying our ſelves.

We pray daily, that God would not leave us to our ſelves, but keep us under the influences of his Grace, and guide us by his good Spirit; and truly, I think we have need too, to pray that God will keep us in his Church, and that thoſe that watch for our Souls, may be ſtill careful and ſollicitous for us; guide us aright when we are unable to direct our ſelves, and tye us to that duty, that is ſo neceſſary and good for us, when we grow wanton and regardleſs of it.

That when the great day of the Lord Jeſus commenceth, they may give up their accounts with joy, and bleſs God for the ſucceſs of their labor and care; and we alſo may riſe up, and bleſs God for them, and bleſs him with them, and all of us be eternally happy in the enjoyment of him, *to whom be praiſe and honour and glory, now and for evermore. Amen.*

FINIS.

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3. The Caſe of Indifferent things uſed in the Worſhip of God, propoſed and Stated, by conſidering theſe Queſtions, *&c.*

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